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7 September 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR: Ken Steins
OS/OIS
Department of Treasury

FROM : [REDACTED] 25X1
Chief, West Europe Division
Office of European Analysis

SUBJECT : Swiss Minister of Economics

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1. The following is in response to your 6 September telephone request. [REDACTED]

2. Kurt Furgler took over the Department of External and Internal Economy last December, after serving 11 years as Minister for Justice and Police. With his appointment, the Christian Democratic Party now holds what are considered the two most important departments in the seven member Federal Council (Bundesrat). Christian Democrat Alphons Egli holds the other -- the Interior Ministry. In the past, one of these posts had always been held by the Radical Party. Furgler's influence over Swiss economic policy could increase soon if Social Democratic Finance Minister Ritschard resigns for health reasons in December, as expected. How much preeminence Furgler gains will depend on the qualifications of Ritschard's successor. [REDACTED]

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3. The Economics Ministry is responsible for international economic and monetary matters, as well as questions of trade and tariffs. In these areas it works closely with the Swiss National Bank. Under Furgler this department has been involved especially in export promotion activities, including expansion of government guarantees for export credits. The Ministry also plays a large role in the domestic economy with regard to arms procurement and the development of transportation, communications, and other infrastructure programs. [REDACTED]

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4. If we can be of further service, please call me [REDACTED]

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